

## DRIVEN FROM THE ISLANDS.

The California Wine Trade Dying Out—Saki and Temperance Talk.

Between the two extremes of saki drinking and total abstinence sentiment, the trade in sweet wines which California had commenced to build up with the Hawaiian islands is in danger of annihilation. The first-named enemy has already caused a serious diminution in our exports and the second threatens to destroy it entirely. California will have to defend herself or suffer the consequences. This she can do through the National Government. The reciprocity treaty between this country and Hawaii has already attained its limitations, and either party to the arrangement can abrogate it by simply giving a year's notice to that effect.

Under the treaty Sandwich Islands sugars are admitted to the United States free of duty, while the American wines and spirits are taxed 15 cents, \$2 and \$3 50 a gallon according to alcoholic strength before they can be placed on the Hawaiian market. This is a discrimination against our products of which California wine-makers complain, and if they have a tithe of the influence at Washington possessed by the planters at Honolulu, they will cause our Government to notify that of the island republic that if it desires sugar to be admitted to the United States free of duty it must accord the same privilege to California wines.

Such a course would afford them sufficient protection against Japanese saki to withstand its inroads. As to the total abstinence proposition before the Hawaiian Legislature, the sugar-planters who dominate it could easily be made to understand that its adoption would also endanger the continuance of a treaty only reciprocal in name.

The California wine interest has already taken up the matter at Honolulu, but advice received from the Hawaiian capital are to the effect that to be successful they must also direct their effort to Washington, as there is the key to the situation. As has been stated, California had commenced to build up a trade with Hawaii in sweet wines when saki appeared upon the scene. That was only a year ago last spring, but it has worked havoc in that brief period. Not only has the home of increasing the business been destroyed, but our exportation has diminished full one-third, and its complete cessation in a few years is easy to foresee if a remedy be not applied.

Saki is a production of fermented rice, containing poisonous compounds, and is known to be deleterious to health and demoralizing in its effects. It is manufactured very cheaply in Japan and imported into the Sandwich Islands, where it pays the same duties as wines, though several attempts have been made to have customs charges on the liquor the same as those on high spirits. The first cost being much less and the duty the same, saki has been able, from its cheapness, to supersede the use of our wines, not only among the Japanese and the Kanakas, but also among the large Portuguese population which had begun to be our best customers. The situation assumed such a grave aspect that, some time ago, the Board of State Viticultural Commissioners adopted a memorial to the Hawaiian Legislature asking that an increased duty should be placed on the Japanese drink or any other wine not made from grapes, or that American wines should be placed on the free list.

It was at first the intention not to hand in this petition until the regular session of the Legislature next February, but last month, in view of the passage by the Senate at the special session of a resolution calling for the appointment of a commission for the abatement of the liquor traffic, it was decided to send it in at once. The tone of the report of the Committee on Commerce, Agriculture and Manufactures was favorable to the memorial, but owing to lack of time the subject was referred to the Commission on the Liquor Traffic, to report in February next.

Private advices from Honolulu say that at that time a great effort will be made to carry a prohibition.

[Continued on 1st page]

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